

Homeless Shelter Workers in Midwestern Urban Centers

Archie Green Fellows Project AFC2016034

Oral History of Gerald Casey, Director of Outreach Ministries at Pacific Garden Mission

Chicago, Illinois on October 20, 2016

Summary

Gerald Casey works as the Director of Outreach Ministries for Pacific Garden Mission (PGM) located at 1458 South Canal Street, Chicago, Illinois 60607. PGM, founded in 1877, is a faith-based organization which provides shelter, meals, bible study, and other services for people who are homeless. Gerald first came to PGM when he was homeless; after receiving services and committing to participate in PGM's Christian programming, Gerald was hired as an employee of PGM. His job duties include coordinating volunteers, doing Christian outreach in the community, helping people obtain I.D.s, and other tasks.

This interview took place in the board room at Pacific Garden Mission.

Interview Log

- 00:00:01 Introduction
- 00:00:15 Gerald's job title and activities
- Director of Outreach Ministries
 - Volunteer Coordinator
 - Street Ministry
 - On-site ministry to shelter guests
 - Help obtaining state I.D.s
 - Assistance arranging tooth extractions
 - Help securing jobs and housing;
- 00:05:58 Description of Pacific Garden Mission's (PGM) services; numbers served (currently 750 guests); no cost for services; sleeping arrangements; rules about staying; who PGM does not allow in the program:
- Sex offenders
 - Unaccompanied youth under 18
 - Anyone who is not sober
 - Male children over the age of 7, even if they're with their families;
- 00:11:14 Monthly cost of operating PGM is \$550,000;
- 12:56 Details about his volunteer coordination work;
- 17:21 Details about his outreach ministry work;
- 18:41 How people hear about staying at PGM; discussion of PGM's radio program: "Unshackled";
- 20:47 Work helping get I.D.s and birth certificates details;
- 25:20 Gerald's religious beliefs; the purpose of hardship;

26:13	Gerald's personal story of homelessness; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drugs and alcohol • Homelessness • Initial reluctance to go to PGM (too proud) • Heard the gospel being preached • Joined PGM's men's bible discipleship program • Rules include no electronics, shave facial hair, no smoking or fighting • Gerald spoke with God about his past and need for help and found salvation;
30:30	Christianity's centrality at PGM vs. at other homeless shelters;
32:41	Gerald's improved life, finances and credit score;
33:55	Details about his work mentoring residents at PGM;
37:35	Details about how he had lived onsite; rules about TV hours and curfews; his moving from PGM into an apartment;
39:50	Details about residents' length of stay, Christian program requirement;
40:32	How Gerald learned to do his work;
43:31	Chemical dependency among residents;
47:03	Challenges and rewards of his work;
00:58:44	End